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THE NEGRO AS A PEASANT FARMER.

BY KATHARINE COMAN.

Never in human history has any race or social class been subjected to so searching discussion and investigation as the Afro-American. Vices and virtues, strengths and weaknesses, have been urged and contradicted with bewildering insistence, until it is well-nigh impossible to approach the subject with an impartial mind. Especially since emancipation has the controversy raged between those who endeavor to set the negro on the high road to Anglo-Saxon achievement and the men who, professing themselves equally his friends, hold that the race is mentally, morally, and physically incapable of civilization. It is forty years since Lee's surrender at Appomattox, yet the presence of the Ethiopian is our most serious national problem. Under the slave régime the capacity of the negro was argued mainly on industrial grounds, the object of the planter being to secure an effective labor force at minimum cost. Emancipation did not simplify the labor problem, and it gave rise to other and more serious difficulties. The discipline of the plantation gave way to an epoch of license far more demoralizing to this primitive race than the corrupting influences of slavery. Social conditions emerged that seemed to menace the integrity of the white race. Enfranchisement superimposed political problems even more threatening. For half a century the negro has been the shuttlecock in a heated

contest between the advocates of diverse theories as to his rights and opportunities, now raised to an exalted position for which he was not equipped, again denied political and even civil rights and degraded to actual peonage.

For the most part this controversy has been unscientific. The abolitionists made the mistake of thinking the negro a fully developed man, capable of responding to the ideals that sway European races. Southerners often make the even more serious mistake of regarding him as an undevelopable brute, with no more capacity for civilization than a dog or a horse. Both parties have ignored the patient processes of evolution and the efficacy of slow time.

Within the past few years the methods of biological science and the principles of sociology have been brought to bear upon our race problem. The influence of heredity is taken into account together with the effect of environment. The search-light of statistical inquiry has been turned upon the negro population, and we are beginning to accumulate a mass of important data. Hoffman's "Race Traits and Tendencies of the American Negro" represents the negro *in statu quo*. His physical and intellectual inferiority, his vicious habits, his industrial inefficiency, are unflinchingly exposed. Tillinghast's "Negro in Africa and America" relates his present failings to inherited traits. Dubois in the Atlanta University Publications demonstrates the latent capacity of the negro, when given education and opportunity. An admirable series of local studies has been published by the Department of Labor. Finally, the Twelfth Census has carried race classification further than in any previous registration, and we have now in hand the general averages from which conclusions may be safely drawn. It is the object of this essay to test previous conclusions in the light of recent statistics, and to indicate the direction of advance so far as our present data warrant prophecy.

The showing is, in many respects, a discouraging one. It is evident that physical and moral deterioration threaten the

race. The future of the negro and of the communities in which the negro predominates are in jeopardy, for a wholesome social order cannot be based upon a decaying substratum. The elimination* of the negro by poverty and disease may possibly be the eventual outcome, but a population of eight million blacks cannot rot out from under without dragging down the white race in a common ruin.

The returns of the twelfth census indicate no tendency to numerical decline. The negro population was enumerated at 8,840,789, somewhat more than Hoffman's estimate.† The rate of increase for the white population in the decade between 1890 and 1900 was 21.4 per cent.,‡ that of the negro 18.1 per cent. The corresponding figures for the preceding decade show a much greater disparity,—an increase of 26.68 for the white population, 13.51 for the negro. Not only is the negro race slowly overcoming its abnormal death-rate,|| so that it bids fair to remain a permanent element in

* Calhoun, "The Caucasian and the Negro"; Tillinghast, "Negro in Africa and America," p. 227.

† Hoffman, "Race Traits and Tendencies," p. 3.

‡ The increase of the native white has been but 18.9 per cent. Census 1900, "Population," Pt. I., p. cxiii.

|| The death-rate in the registration area of the United States for the year terminating May 31, 1900, is given in Census 1900, "Vital Statistics," Pt. I., as follows:—

	<i>Whites.</i>	<i>Negroes.</i>	<i>Indians.</i>
In cities	18.4	28.4	22.7
In rural districts	15.3	19.1	20.2

Under rural conditions the negro death-rate compares favorably with that of the Indian, and is not abnormally higher than that of the white population, rural or urban.

The death-rate has risen for both white and colored population in the ten Southern cities cited by Hoffman (p. 39), the increase being slightly greater for the negroes.

DEATH-RATE IN TEN SOUTHERN CITIES.

	<i>White.</i>		<i>Colored.</i>	
	<i>1890.</i>	<i>1900.</i>	<i>1890.</i>	<i>1900.</i>
Washington	18.97	19.1	34.74	31.
Baltimore	21.96	19.1	32.38	31.2
Richmond	22.31	24.5	37.86	38.1
Memphis	17.84	21.9	24.58	28.6
Louisville	27.64	17.9	28.79	28.7
Atlanta	18.92	23.1	32.26	31.8
Savannah	24.7	24.7	37.86	43.3
Charleston	21.36	25.6	42.20	46.7
Mobile	21.57	21.9	34.51	30.8
New Orleans	25.96	23.8	40.73	42.4
Combined death-rate	20.12	22.16	32.61	35.2

the population of the United States, the latest data go to show that it is fast anchored south of Mason and Dixon's line. Statistics for interstate migration show a movement from the border States both to north and south, but the centre of the negro population has changed little in the last twenty years. The median point has advanced thirty-six miles in a south-westerly direction across western Georgia. Eighty-five per cent. of the persons with negro blood in their veins belong in the Southern States to-day.

Moreover, the negroes remain essentially a rural population. The dangerous drift to cities pointed out by Hoffman* is less marked for them than for the white population, even in the South. The thirteen typical cities for which in the decade 1880-90 the rate of increase for the whites was 27.22 per cent., and for the colored 32.36 per cent., show reversed proportions in the last census. The same cities report for the decade closing in 1900 a considerable augmentation in the rate of increase of the white population (47.86) and an actual falling off in the rate of increase of the negroes (23.02) It is evident that the white population is moving townward more rapidly than the colored, even when the country village is taken into account. In Georgia, for example, in the last decade the increase of whites in towns of 2,500 and over was 25.9 per cent.; that of negroes, 17.2 per cent. The "crackers" are going to the towns to find employment in the mills. The negro is far more likely to remain upon the land. There is slowly being evolved a differentiation of habitat and employment, each race selecting the environment best suited to its inherited capacity.

The negro then remains, and must, for an indefinite period to come, remain, the labor reliance of the Southern planter. His economic efficiency is still, even more now than under the slave régime, a matter of prime importance in the development of Southern agriculture. As to the value of the negro farm laborer, whether by comparison with the white or by

* Hoffman, "Race Traits and Tendencies," pp. 10 and 12.

comparison with the *ante-bellum* negro, opinions vary so widely that it is impossible to arrive at a settled conclusion.* James M. Blodgett, editor of the recent bulletin on farm labor,† reasoning from the data furnished by the crop reports, derives a qualified indorsement. "While reports of neglect, instability, and unthrift, come from various regions, and negroes are not desired in some districts, numerous reports speak of them as superior to the available white help, as improving in condition, gaining farms of their own, and as the best help for the South, the extreme preference, perhaps, being in the rice districts, where white labor does not become acclimated." On the other hand, George K. Holmes,‡ reasoning, presumably, from the same data, asserts that the negro laborer is deteriorating, and that "the old economic deduction that free labor is more efficient than slave labor is a gigantic fallacy, when viewed upon the magnitude of Southern agriculture." A review of F. L. Olmsted's "Journey in the Seaboard Slave States" must shake one's confidence in this conclusion, re-enforced though it be by the opinion of hundreds of exasperated employers throughout the South. A pro-slavery journalist|| cited by Olmsted estimated that the day's labor of a slave was only half that of a free man. Olmsted quotes practical planters to the effect that the free laborer of the North was worth four negro slaves at farm work.§ Complaints of the inefficiency of the negro hand, his laziness, ignorance, carelessness, impudence, were even more strenuous than now. The true explanation for the very general impression that the negro laborer has deteriorated is probably that suggested by Professor Bassett. The slave whose docile efficiency is

* Hoffman, "Race Traits and Tendencies," pp. 251-253.

† Bulletin 26, United States Department of Agriculture: "Wages of Farm Labor in the United States," p. 33.

‡ Publications American Economic Association, Third Series, vol. 5, p. 183.

|| F. Law Olmsted, "A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States," p. 203.

§ *Ibid.*, Appendix, pp. 717-723.

remembered by contemporary Southerners is the house servant, the fond old "mammy," the deferential and devoted "uncles" and "aunties" who belonged to the "big house." The field hands, male and female, were far from the ken of childhood. Their brutish stupidity and sullen viciousness no novelist has cared to depict.* At present, as Dubois has pointed out, we have precisely the converse situation. The better type of negro is self-employed. The wage-paid laborers, whether house servants or field hands, are exactly the most inefficient and shiftless of their race.

Estimates of the comparative merits of free laborers, white and colored, are well-nigh as many as the number of employers and as varied. If the rate of wages be an accurate test of efficiency, the present showing is slightly against the negro laborer. Throughout the old South, where more than half the field hands are negroes, the wages paid for white labor are higher by an average of \$1.48 per month. The excess varies from four cents a day in Tennessee to fifteen in South Carolina, Alabama, and Louisiana. In Kentucky alone does the colored laborer receive more than the white, the excess amounting to five cents per day. Some part of this wage discrepancy may be explained by the negro's lower standard of living,† some part by his failure to make an organized demand for better pay, some part again by sentiment and custom;‡ but it can hardly be supposed that planters throughout the Southern States would usually pay higher wages to white laborers unless that labor was worth more in harvest returns. It is true that many planters prefer colored help; but the prevailing reasons for employing a negro in preference to a white man, as Tillinghast points

* Cf. Olmsted, "Seaboard Slave States," pp. 386-388.

† Where wages are reported with board, the ration allowance for the negro is 18 cents per day, while the board allowance for the white is 23 cents per day. Bulletin 26, United States Department of Agriculture, p. 39.

‡ Cf. Census 1900, "Agriculture," Pt. II., p. 418. The part played by the two races in the production of cotton "tends to show that any difference in wages is more a matter of sentiment than of relative efficiency."

out,* are that he is cheaper, more docile and contented, or that he is physically better suited to a subtropic climate and monotonous field labor. Under supervision, vigilant and severe,—approaching, indeed, the rigor of the slave overseer,—a negro gang can accomplish an enormous amount of work with less respite than white men would require. As roustabouts or stevedores they are unexcelled. But the negro does not give in exchange for money wage the zealous, intelligent, reliable service expected from the best type of European laborer. The question may fairly be raised, however, whether the industrial capacity of a race is to be gauged by its adaptability to the wage system. The sugar planters of the Hawaiian Islands, who have had experience with field laborers of many races,—Polynesian, Chinese, Portuguese, Japanese, negroes, Porto Ricans,—find that the system of wage-paying is the least satisfactory of any of the forms of labor employment, “since it does not stimulate the ambition of the laborer and reduces the standard of performance to the product of the least efficient and most thriftless.” †

The unsatisfactory qualities of the negro as a wage laborer were brought home to the Southern planters in the years immediately following emancipation.‡ The first effects of freedom were intoxicating, demoralizing. The freedman hated work with peculiar vehemence because it savored of slavery. He had little foresight or economic ambition, and saw no reason for earning more money than was necessary to maintain the standard of living derived from the slave quarters. A windowless, one-room cabin, with rations of pork and corn meal, satisfied his creature wants. With three days' labor a week the negro field hand could meet the physical necessities of the sunny South, and he had no incentive for doing more. After several years of disastrous

*Tillinghast, “The Negro in Africa and America,” p. 179.

† Report of Hawaiian Labor Commission on Co-operation and Profit-sharing, 1895.

‡ Hammond, “The Cotton Industry,” American Economic Association Publications, New Series, No. 1., pp. 124 and 125.

experiment the cotton planters abandoned the wage system, and tried another. The land was rented on shares. Cabin, implements, and work-animals were furnished to the tenant laborer, and the crop was divided,* half and half. When rations were furnished as well as equipment, or if the soil was especially fertile, three-fourths of the cotton picked went to the land-owner. Under this plan a premium was placed upon intelligence and industry, since reward was commensurate with effort. It is the characteristic tenure of the cotton belt to this day. The cropping system relieves the planter of the necessity of paying wages in advance of his money return, and enables him to divide with the actual cultivator the losses of a bad year. A considerable amount of supervision is necessary to the best results. The large land-owner sends his riders through the estate to overlook the tenants, and make sure that they are giving due attention to the fields. The derelict is not infrequently forced to adequate toil by the use of boot and lash. With the accumulation of capital and increasing power of self-direction the negro tenant has exchanged share payments for a cash rental. Nearly half the tenant farmers of this race are working under the latter system to-day.†

The negro tenant farmer makes a good showing in the crop returns, but his annual yield is often secured with unnecessary wear for land, tools, and draft animals. The soil is exhausted and the mules worn out because the cultivator is not the owner and has no concern for the conservation of the capital he uses. Neither the wage system nor the métayer system can be regarded as the ultimate solution of the Southern labor problem. Nowhere is Mill's classic contention for the economic advantages of peasant proprietorship better exemplified. The African is endowed with a land hunger like that of the French peasantry. Bruce‡ at-

* Bruce, "The Plantation Negro," p. 213; also, Hammond, "The Cotton Industry," pp. 131-133.

† Census 1900, "Agriculture," Pt. II., p. 409.

‡ Bruce, "The Plantation Negro," pp. 210 and 211.

tributes the zeal for the acquisition of land noted among the negroes of Virginia to their desire to attain an independent position where they may work or play at will. J. Bradford Laws, who contributed the interesting report on the sugar plantation negro* to the Department of Labor series, looks no further for explanation than to the much-cited imitative faculty of the race. No one, however, who has watched the patient endeavor of a negro farmer to free himself from a crop mortgage or to pay off the instalments due on his bit of land can doubt that the impelling motive is a genuine love for the soil, coupled with the desire for secure possession of the means of self-support.† The score of impoverished acres represents to him freedom, progress, the future. It is his one opportunity for self-realization. How far this peasant instinct has been translated into fact is evidenced by some recent statistics. Dubois‡ has estimated, on the basis of the county assessor's returns, the number of acres owned by negroes in fifty-six typical counties of Georgia. The figures cover a period of twenty-five years, and go far to establish an economic tendency. In 1874, the year in which the distinction between white and colored landholders began to be made, the holdings of negroes amounted to 338,769 acres. In 1900 they amounted to 1,075,073. This threefold gain has been won by the most strenuous earning and saving. It means slow, difficult, patient achievement. Much depends upon the price of cotton. In the years of high prices,

* Bulletin United States Department of Labor No. 33.

† At Calhoun, Ala., in the heart of the black belt, where the negroes outnumber the whites by 27 to 1 and the crop-mortgage system is at its worst, a land company was organized in 1896 with a view to giving the negro farmers a chance to buy land. The results of seven years' experience are most encouraging. Of the one hundred men who undertook to purchase by instalment, forty have secured title-deeds, forty-two are still making payments, and seventeen have failed or have been excluded from the company. Two thousand acres of land, worth \$11,000, is now in possession of these peasants. High prices for the cotton crop of the year past have enabled them to cancel \$1,000 indebtedness, to advance \$2,000 toward the expenses of the coming season, to pay \$1,121 in school tuition, and to invest \$5,000 in farms and farm buildings.

‡ Dubois, "Negro Landholder of Georgia," p. 665. Bulletin Department of Labor, No. 35.

1884, 1890, 1900, there is a long step in advance, one hundred thousand acres being added each year. When cotton drops to five cents a pound, there is actual retrogression, as in 1894, 1898, and 1899. The cotton corner of the year just past was the means of putting thousands of negro farmers in full possession of the land they tilled. For no other State have we so complete a showing. Hoffman cites* the auditor's records of Virginia, where the distinction is made as to color of owner. In 1891, 698,074 acres were owned by negroes; in 1895, 833,147. In September, 1900, the Auditor of Public Accounts reported the acreage held by negroes as 993,541.

Bruce† attributes this achievement to the discipline and industrial training acquired by the negro under the slave régime, and opines that such evidence of thrift cannot be permanent. "The number of younger proprietors is very insignificant by comparison." Tillinghast‡ quotes this opinion with approval, though confessing that he had secured no data on which to base a final judgment, and this is no doubt the prevailing impression among Southern observers. We have at least one very suggestive instance to the contrary. The community of Sandy Spring, Md.,|| was originally settled by Quakers, who emancipated their slaves in the first decades of the nineteenth century. Many of the negro families have been free for three generations. The district was, moreover, a recourse for the manumitted slaves of surrounding counties. The negroes of Sandy Spring, therefore, afford a rare opportunity for determining the effect of freedom upon the industrial capacity of the race. Thirty per cent. of the negroes of this district are property owners, whereas but seven per cent. of the negro population

* Hoffman, "Race Traits and Tendencies," p. 267.

† Bruce, "The Plantation Negro," p. 224.

‡ Tillinghast, "The Negro in Africa and America," p. 192.

|| Thom, "Negroes of Sandy Spring, Md.," Bulletin 32, Department of Labor.

of the State as a whole have acquired real estate.* An actual age test reveals no diminution of zeal for land ownership in the *post-bellum* generation. Taking fifty-five years as the age of the man who could have experienced none of the industrial discipline of the slave régime, we find the showing slightly better for this category. Of the negro land-owners of Sandy Spring, 28.3 per cent. were over fifty-five years when Mr. Thom secured his data, and 30.4 per cent. less than fifty-five years of age. The slave régime did indeed train the negro to technical skill, and the plantation was doubtless an "industrial school" † of great significance; but technical skill is not the factor of prime importance in industrial education. Even more momentous to the economic capacity of a race are ambition, self-direction, thrift. These vital traits the planter did not inculcate. It was indeed the usual policy of the slave-owner to discourage such qualities as dangerous.‡ That the race has been slowly and painfully acquiring these essential traits since emancipation, their very considerable property acquisitions bear evidence. In summing up the achievements of the negro farmers of the South Atlantic States, L. G. Powers concludes that the results in land ownership, at least, are highly creditable to the race. "The negroes at the close of the Civil War were just starting out upon their career as wage-earners. They had no land and no experience as farm-owners or tenants, and none of them became farm-owners by inheritance nor inherited money with which to purchase land. Of the 371,414 white farmers added since 1860, very many were the children of land-owners and came into possession of farmland, or the wherewithal to purchase the same, by inheritance. When this difference in the industrial condition of the two races in 1860 is taken into account, the fact that the relative number of owners (287,933) among the negro farmers in the

* 5,842 out of 60,406, according to the census of 1900.

† Tillinghast, "The Negro in Africa and America," p. 138.

‡ Olmsted, "Seaboard Slave States," pp. 58 and 59.

South Atlantic States in 1900 was practically three-fourths as great as the relative number of owners among the white farmers of those States added in the same period marks a most noteworthy achievement."*

Admitting zeal for the land ownership as an established race trait, Hoffman† raises the question "whether they will make use of their land to the same extent that the whites do," and whether this peasant proprietor may not "in the end prove more of a hindrance than a help to the economic progress of the South." Lacking more accurate data,‡ Hoffman cites as evidence of the inferiority of colored labor the falling off in the tobacco crop between 1859 and 1889 in five selected counties of Virginia, where the majority of the population was colored, with the increasing return from the same crop in four selected counties of Kentucky where the white men were in the majority. The same conclusion is derived from the declining rice crop of South Carolina and Georgia by comparison with the increased production of Louisiana, where the rice fields are cultivated by machinery and white labor. A similar comparison is made of the cotton crop for the years 1860, 1890, and 1894 in Mississippi and Texas. "With less than half as large a colored population as Mississippi, the State of Texas produced in 1894 almost three times the cotton crop of the former State. With almost twice the colored population of 1860, Mississippi in 1894 produced less cotton than thirty-four years ago."|| The facts cited can hardly be regarded as conclusive. There is no evidence as to the number of cultivators represented in each element of the population in the districts and at the dates compared. Moreover, Hoffman takes no account of the condition of the soil. It is evident that the "dead lands" of Virginia would not yield as good returns as the comparatively new soils of Kentucky, no matter how intelli-

* Census 1900, "Agriculture," Pt. I., p. cvii.

† Hoffman, "Race Traits and Tendencies," p. 297; cf. pp. 305 and 306.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 254.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 261.

gent the laborer. Nor can a fair comparison be instituted between the rice production of South Carolina and Louisiana or the cotton crop of Mississippi and Texas without taking the relative fertility of the soil into consideration.

Hoffman had no data by which to estimate the productivity of the negro farmer as distinguished from the negro laborer. The Twelfth Census makes distinction between white and colored farmers as to crop returns for tobacco, rice, and cotton; and we have now, for the first time, adequate basis for comparison.* It is evident that the white farmer is producing, on the average, nearly two hundred pounds more tobacco to the acre than the colored. That this difference in yield may be accounted for by inequality in some other factor than labor efficiency is suggested by the fact that the discrepancy is less in the North Central and South Central divisions than for the older lands of the Atlantic States. In both the North Atlantic and North Central divisions the negro farmer raises more tobacco to the acre than the white

* Census 1900, "Agriculture," Pt. II.

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TOBACCO CROP, 1899.

		<i>Lbs. per Acre</i>	
		<i>White Farmers.</i>	<i>Colored Farmers.</i>
United States		814.	615.8
South Atlantic		661.8	584.9
South Central		800.	690.9
North Atlantic		1,490.3	1,119.6
North Central		1,023.8	834.5

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RICE CROP, 1899.

		<i>Lbs. per Acre.</i>	
		<i>White Farmers.</i>	<i>Colored Farmers.</i>
South Carolina		717.	400.
Louisiana		807.	788.

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COTTON CROP, 1899. 500 LB. BALES PER ACRE.

		<i>White Farmers.</i>			<i>Colored Farmers.</i>		
		<i>Owner.</i>	<i>Cash-tenant.</i>	<i>Share-tenant.</i>	<i>Owner.</i>	<i>Cash-tenant.</i>	<i>Share-tenant.</i>
United States . . . . .	.398	.403	.380	.364	.381	.400	
Alabama . . . . .	.392	.361	.368	.314	.298	.325	
Arkansas . . . . .	.380	.509	.398	.396	.510	.443	
Florida . . . . .	.244	.258	.238	.227	.248	.241	
Georgia . . . . .	.379	.349	.371	.320	.310	.346	
Louisiana . . . . .	.452	.592	.466	.423	.562	.530	
Mississippi . . . . .	.430	.447	.447	.395	.454	.461	
North Carolina . . . . .	.453	.438	.418	.391	.373	.426	
South Carolina . . . . .	.462	.416	.397	.377	.367	.374	
Tennessee . . . . .	.405	.414	.374	.342	.359	.348	
Texas . . . . .	.375	.381	.373	.353	.379	.367	

farmer in the South. That the poverty of the negro rice farmer may account for his inferior production is suggested by the fact that in Louisiana, working with new soils and modern methods, he produces more rice to the acre than the South Carolina planter. The census data for the cotton crop of 1899 are classified not only by race, but by tenure as well. The showing is of great interest. The colored share-tenant produces more cotton to the acre than the farmers of any other category, the white cash-tenant alone excepted, and the difference in this case amounts to but one and one-half pounds per acre. President Houston* of the Texas Agricultural College accounts for the superior crop returns of the negro share-tenant on the ground that he is more docile, and follows, more frequently than the white man, the suggestions of his landlord. Moreover, the negro share-tenant is usually furnished by the land-owner. The negro owner must depend upon his own poor resources, and gets no supervision. Probably, however, the determining reasons for the inferior productivity of the negro owner is found in the fact that he can purchase only the unfertile or exhausted lands. In Arkansas, where he has no difficulty in getting possession of fertile soils, the colored land-owner produces more cotton to the acre than the white. Commenting on the general showing for the cotton crop, the compiler of the agricultural returns of the Twelfth Census states,† "Considering the fact that he [the negro farmer] emerged from alavery only one-third of a century ago, and considering also his comparative lack of means for procuring the best land or for getting the best results from what he has, this near approach to the standard attained by the white man's experience for more than a century denotes remarkable progress."

The negro should, in all fairness, be compared not with the Anglo-Saxon, but with undeveloped races, such as the

* Publications American Economic Association, Third Series, vol. 5, p. 118.

† Census 1900, "Agriculture," Pt. II., p. 419.

Indian and the Hawaiian. According to the most recent statistics* the negro farmer expends less per acre than any other agriculturist in the United States except the Indian and the Hawaiian, and gets a higher return than any but the Chinese and Japanese. In proportion to value of product, he spends less for labor and more for fertilizer than any of his competitors. He produces, on the average, seven pounds more cotton to the acre than the Indian farmer who is working the new lands of Oklahoma and Indian Territory.† The Chinese and Japanese farmers represented in the census returns are cultivating market gardens with great inherited skill. The Hawaiian yield per acre of improved land is probably derived from sugar-cane. When comparing percentages of ownership, one should bear in mind that the African set out to acquire property with only his hands to his credit, whereas to both the Indian and Hawaiian farmer possession of his inherited acres was guaranteed by government.

There are seven hundred and fifty thousand‡ negro farmers in the United States, of whom one-fourth own and three-fourths lease their land. Thirty-eight per cent. of them are share-tenants, 36 per cent. cash-tenants. Seventy and one-

* Census 1900, "Agriculture," Pt. I., pp. xcv. cxxv, cxxix, cxlii.

	<i>Owners and part owners.</i>	<i>Expendi- ture for labor per acre.</i>	<i>Fertil- izer.</i>	<i>Av. value product per acre.</i>	<i>per acre imp. land.</i>
White	68.3 per cent.	\$0.44	\$0.06	\$5.60	\$11.45
Negro	25. "	.23	.15	6.69	10.95
Indian	93.1 "	.11	.01	2.16	8.46
Chinese	8.9 "	11.25	.29	36.48	61.51
Japanese	9. "	4.32	.37	14.46	47.14
Hawaiian	73.8 "	.13	.01	.75	14.03

† *Ibid.*, pp. 427 and 428.

	<i>Number cotton farmers.</i>	<i>Acreage in cotton</i>	<i>Product 1899 in 500 lb. bales.</i>	<i>Bales per acre.</i>
White	849,554	14,616,543	5,712,938	.390
Negro	569,030	4,658,558	3,721,407	.385
Indian	6,258	90,262	21,745	.371

‡ *Ibid.*, p. ciii ; cf. civ.

	<i>Number farmers.</i>	<i>Acreage.</i>	<i>Per Cent. Improved.</i>	<i>Average Value Land.</i>	<i>Build- ings.</i>	<i>Imple- ments.</i>	<i>Live Stock.</i>
White	4,970,129	798,908,187	48.9	\$2,567	\$701	\$149	\$599
Negroes	746,717	38,233,933	61.1	434	96	25	114

half per cent. of them are growing cotton.* The industrial function of the negro to-day, no less than under the slave régime, is to provide raw material for the spindles and looms operated by the whites. The typical negro farmer has finally earned what in reconstruction days he fondly hoped the government would give him outright,—“forty acres and a mule.” The area of the largest proportion of holdings (45.9 per cent.) is from 20 to 50 acres. The average value of the negro’s farm is \$434; buildings, \$96; implements, \$25; live stock, \$114. He is handicapped by poverty, ignorance of agricultural science, a barbaric fondness for display. He readily falls victim to the wiles of the sewing-machine agent and the clock pedler. He is the chosen prey of the local merchant. Bound hand and foot by a crop mortgage, he is no better than a slave. Once in possession of his land, with sufficient capital in hand to carry him through to the harvest, he may become a valuable peasant. Blind and reckless is the community that would put any stumbling-block in his path.

* Census 1900, “Agriculture,” Pt. I., p. xcv.